

UK COVID-19 INQUIRY: EXTRACTS FROM SIR PATRICK VALLANCE'S NOTEBOOKS

Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
January 2020	"Chris thought would be contained [...] PM "my gut tells me this will be fine" MH - desperate to own & lead [...] PM still optimistic [...] CW more cautious than me."	1, 2, 3, 4

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
February 2020	On fatigue: "COBRA stands but all chaired by MH & very health focussed. CW took lead on all. CW worried about pulling trigger too soon - "cause harm" & introduced some stuff on "fatigue" if you started too early (not from BS or SAGE)."	3

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
04.05.20	"Late afternoon meeting with PM on schools. My God this is complicated and models will not provide the answer. PM is clearly bamboozled."	27

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
14.05.20	"PM asking whether we have 'overdone it on the lethality of this disease'. He sways between optimism and pessimism...PM still confused on different types of test (he holds it in his head for a session and then it goes)."	35

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
11.06.20	"Paper from No10/CO (Simon Case) for 1m/2m review. Some person has completely rewritten the same advice as though it is the definitive version. They have just cherry picked. Quite extraordinary. [...] Note - apparently Simon Case said don't bring new schools advice Q to SAGE - as the minutes get published."	62

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
11.06.20	"Watching PM get his head around stats is awful. He finds relative and absolute risk almost impossible to understand."	62

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
25.06.20	"SoS Education DfE says don't ask SAGE as minutes get published."	73

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
22.07.20	"PM struggled with whole concept of doubling times...just couldn't get it."	96

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
06.08.20	"PM Covid (S) meeting on schools. 'Don't want to hear about plan B and C for failure. I just want all pupils back at school' [...] 'We are no longer taking this Covid excuse stuff. Get back to school'."	112

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
24.08.20	"Scotland breaks ranks over face coverings and schools despite CMO having worked hard to get all CMOs aligned to a very good statement released the day before."	127

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
27.08.20	"Hancock - praising himself for mask decision. He knows that Scotland decision was not based on medical advice (ie it was totally political)"	130

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
04.09.20	"No.10 team segmentation meeting. Pushing really hard on segmenting and allowing people back. We explained (i) young still get ill and may get long-term effects (ii) you can't separate the age groups as it eventually leaks in - look at Spain, France, USA."	141

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
07.09.20	<p>"Chief Constables have said current rules too complex and difficult to police. PM looking glum. Then suddenly - 'Is the whole thing a mirage? The curves just follow a natural pattern despite what you do' Incredulity in the room [...] The whole meeting carefully manages the PM (is it always like this?) and he eventually approves the measures - really just reinforcing and enforcing what we should be doing anyway. DC says "we don't want any unrealistic Hancockian timetables." [...] I leave and comment again that PM does not look like a man enjoying his role. CMO still keeps offering a slightly slower path (I think this is wrong and said it)."</p>	144

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
08.09.20	"Hancock explained things well for once and reminded them about "long Covid""	146

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
08.09.20	"Clare Gardiner (JBC) talked PM through the graphs (it is difficult - he asks questions like 'which line is the dark red one' - is he colour blind?) Then 'so you think positivity has gone up overnight oh oh then 'Oh god, bloody hell.' But it is all the same stuff he was shown 6h ago."	146-147

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
16.09.20	"PM says, 'Maybe we should blame ourselves. Maybe all the moonshot talk hasn't helped.' A rare moment of truthful insight. Complete chaos over schools and what they should do. No one had any answers."	159

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
20.09.20	<p>“5 hr of meetings with the PM. He came back from Battle of Britain memorial service and was distressed by seeing everyone separated and in masks - ‘mad and spooky, we have got to end it.’ Starts challenging numbers and questioning whether they really translate into deaths. Says it is not exponential etc etc. Looked broken - head in hands a lot. “Is it because of the great libertarian nation we are that it spreads so much.” ‘Maybe we are licked as a species’ ... ‘We are too shit to get our act together.’ We went round in circles and then the famous whiteboard emerges. Discussed Package A (mild ↑ in measures) and Package C (full lockdown) and when and how to do a circuit-breaker [...] eventually sort of agree circuit-breaker and stricter measures [...] but PM keeps clutching at straws.”</p>	170

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
06.10.20	<p>“Barrington Declaration - a whole lot of slightly on the edge people...one or two sensible people. But it basically advocates herd immunity and letting rip. 5 reasons why they are wrong: 1) We don't know how long immunity lasts or how complete it is. 2) People in the at-risk group can't be shielded. 3) People not in the vulnerable group will die anyway. 4) Long Covid. 5) Hospitals will be overrun. Numbers ↑↑ - PM called CMO. Case called and they will do more now.”</p>	205

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07.10.20	<p>"PM very sceptical about Long Covid - 'It's like Gulf War Syndrome,' he says." [...] I was asked whether the new lockdown would work. I said, 'Fighting chance provided we've got the behavioural change.' They didn't like that and lots of mocking of 'fighting chance' [...] eventually agreed that more lockdowns needed in North (and must do things in other areas to stop them getting worse)."</p>	206, 208

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000280061	Page
11.10.20	<p>"Press conference tomorrow. I am now dropped in favour of Cx - good. They need to understand and own the decisions they are making [...] Covid O [...] Being asked to 'approve the measures knowing that it is not enough'. Gave the example that Bolton worked but only because hospitality fully closed. This is a massive abrogation of responsibility. Jenrick tried to place it as a 'lack of good evidential base' and basing it on lack of science. [...] Grant Shapps got it right and understood the implications. Ben Wallace also got it and says just doesn't go far enough and argued for clear targets. Dido came in and said in Bolton and Leicester where all hospitality shut the $R < 1$ whereas everywhere else with softer measures not. Cabinet call. Whilst waiting someone clearly not on mute - baby crying and then she starts singing 'the wheels on the bus' - somehow symbolic of the shambles. PM said on call, 'The package we have as a baseline is unlikely to get $R < 1$ unless local leaders go further' ... Hancock says this is our last shot at avoiding national lockdown...meek as mice from Cabinet ministers."</p>	214-216

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25.10.20	<p>"PM meeting - begins to argue for letting it all rip. Saying yes, there will be more casualties but so be it - 'they have had a good innings.' Not persuaded by Edmunds, Ferguson, Farrar . PM says "the population just has to behave doesn't it! Heat maps "I have the necrotising maps" so depressing. DC says trajectory will leave us in Nov - much as where we were in 1st week of April. Chris quite bullish about being able to take the brakes off more in April.... Goes on about Gulf War Syndrome again [...] PM getting very frustrated - throwing papers down. PM then back on to 'Most people who die have reached their time anyway.' DC arguing we need to save lives - it is not democratically possible to follow another route... [...] DC argued again (rightly) that a lockdown's coming and therefore do it sooner rather than later. PM concludes, 'Looks like we are in a really tough spot, a complete shambles. I really don't want to do another national lockdown.' PM told that if he wants to go down this route of letting go, 'you need to tell people - you need to tell them you are going to allow people to die' [...] Conclusion - beef up the Tiers - consider a national lockdown - decide by when. DC says 'Rishi thinks just let people die and that's okay.' This all feels like a complete lack of leadership."</p>	238-240

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28.10.20	"Apparently CO now cautious about putting things to SAGE because we publish it all. That is a very bad outcome."	243

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000303282	Page
03.01.21	"The NHS in London is in real trouble. The govt needs to lock down more firmly & to take the advice on schools [...] Called Chris & agreed he should pull a group together to listen directly. He is worried about individual extremist views [...] Schools is a complete mess largely due to DFE."	19

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000303282	Page
19.02.21	"PM Dashboard - Taken through the graphs but it was a real struggle to get him to understand them."	74

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Date	Extract from Sir Patrick Vallance's Notebooks - INQ000303282	Page
26.10.21	"Economic predictions! HMT saying economy nearly back to normal + Plan B would cost 18bn. No evidence. No transparency. Pure dogma + wrong throughout"	255

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07.02.21	"CMO talked afterwards about inquiry - was lockdown too late in March, could we have known (he was a delayer of course). Regrets we had re press - "fatigue" "herd immunity" "20,000" & the graphs. we have learnt a lot."	66

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17.04.20	"Press conference with Alok Sharma and Yvonne Doyle [...] Yvonne opened up the only two areas we agreed to steer clear of - ethnicity (we don't have the answer yet) and she wasn't even asked the question [...]"	16

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11.06.20	"Slater basically described keeping Gavin Williamson away from policy development but give him some illusion of ownership 'but not his area and not his expertise'. [...] 'I don't know what Gavin's plan for schools is but probably pretty feeble' PM."	62